

**PUBLIC EDUCATION & SPECIAL SCHOOLS SUBCOMMITTEE
BOND BILL REQUESTS**

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

\$30,000,000 - School Buses

Description of the request: The state utilizes 5,582 school buses for regular routes and as spares. Of significant concern are issues related to the age of the buses in the fleet, the difficulty in recruiting and retaining maintenance technicians and drivers, areas of rapid student growth, and student ride times in excess of ninety minutes. Although the average age of the buses in the fleet is 15.5 years, the manufacture dates of these buses ranges almost thirty years, from 1988 to 2016. In 1994, the state enacted a bond bill that led to the purchase of over 2,100 buses. Those 21-year old, Type D, rear-engine buses have served our state well; however, they are now having significant issues. The rear-engine configuration also makes these buses more difficult to inspect, service, and maintain. The occurrence of bus fires and dangerous overheating (collectively called “thermal events”) has increased over the years. Since 2012, the incidence of thermal events is again on the rise. Type D, rear-engine transit-style buses, which are more than one-third (34.5 percent) of the fleet, were involved in 79.6 percent of the thermal events since 1995. This request would complete purchases of new buses to replace all 1995-96 Type D buses.

Explanation of the request:

- Replace 1,140 (100%) of the 1995-96 Type D buses would cost \$95,000,000
- Sub-committee is requesting \$30,000,000